THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED). (a) The Government has recently decided to permit establishment of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) by the private|joint sector or State Governments.

(b) and (c) Two proposals have been received from the private sector for setting up Export Processing Zones at Bombay and Sachin, Dist. Surat (Gujarat).

(d) Policy, procedures and benefits in respect of units in EPZs would also apply in the case of EPZs developed by private|joint sector or State Governments. EPZ promoters would have to fulfil the prescribed requirements of security as well as relevant customs laws and procedures, bear this custom bonding charges, comply with local industrial, labour or other laws and rules|regulations in regard to area planning.

Eztension of credit to Russia importers

35. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Russia has decided to extend 180 days credit to all importers, wishing to buy goods, from India;

(b) whether this is likely to help in the repayment of Rs. 36,000 crore owned by India to Russia as the legacy of the Rupee-Rouble Trade Agreement and if so, to what extent;

(c) whether Russia also propose to auction their Rupee reserve; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Russian side conveyed to us during the visit of Mr. Y. F. Yarov, Dy. Prime Minister of Russia (3—7 June, 1994) hat the Russian Government was propsoing to offer the facility of 180 days deferred payment to importers purchasing goods in rupees from India against debt repayment funds. However, the poposal has not yet been formally announced.

(c) and (d) The Russian Government has conveyed that they are considering the idea of allocating a part of the rupees available under the repayment account to importers through auctions. The proposal is, however, at the preliminary stage and would involve using only a part of the annual repayment funds.

Growth rate of exports

36. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:
SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN:
MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the growth rate of Indian Exports during April-May, 1994 was 9.66 per cent as compared to the growth rate of 28 per cent during the same months in the year 1993;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what immediate remedial measures Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) In US $ terms, exports during April-May, 1994 are estimated at $ 3793 million as against US $ 3459 million during April-May, 1993, signifying a growth of 9.66 percent. Exports during April-May, 1993-94 had registered a growth of 30 percent over the corresponding period of previous year, the reasons for the modest export growth are withdawal of IPRS affecting engineering ex-

ports; sluggishness in demand for readymade garments and agricultural items like rice; procedural problems on account of withdrawal of excise exemptions for SBI units; and overall high rate of inflation of over 10 % causing an appreciation of the real exchange rate of rupee, thereby adversely affecting export performance. Exports exhibit seasonality and this too has contributed to the modest rate of growth.

(c) Export promotion is a continuous process and steps are taken to boost exports in consultation with trade, industry and export promotion organisations. The cooperation of the States is being sought increasingly and the Government has formulated a new scheme called Export Promotion Industrial Parks (EPIP) Scheme for this purpose.

Tariff cut on industrial trade under GATT

37. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that among all the member countries of GATT, India has offered the higest tariff cut of 15 per cent on covered industrial trade under the new World Trade Treaty signed at Marrakesh on April 15, 1994; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for offering this high tariff cut?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) India has bound its tariffs on industrial raw materials, intermediates and capital goods at the level of 25 per cent and 40 per cent. This is to be achieved in six equated annual instalments beginning 1995. The base tariffs for reductions are the tariffs as on 1.1.90. Since then our tariffs have been lowered substantially. Hence we may not be required to undertake any significant tariff reductions during initial years of the implementation of the Uruguay Round results.

The target agreed to at the mid-term review in Montreal was to cut tariffs by one-third (a 33 per cent reduction). Generally speaking, both developed and developing countries have offered tariff bindings exceeding this target. Accoding to a GATT Secretariat analysis, our tariff offers on industrial goods entail a weighted average reduction of about 55 per cent.

The figures of 15 per cent has been cited in a press release based upon a US Treasury Department study. The basis of this assessment has not been made clear in the release.

Wages of workers of Jute Mills

38. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that workers employed in jute mills of the country are not paid their wages as per the tripartite agreement;

(b) whether it is also a fact that many employers have deprived their employees of their statutory dues like provident fund, gratuity, bonus etc.;

(c) whether Government have enquired into these lapses and if so, details of those found guilty and action taken against them; and

(d) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MNISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Non-implementation of Government's Notification

39. SHRI A. NALLASIVAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state: